

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 27, 2004
6:00 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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RAIN TO TURN TO SNOW IN DELAWARE; RESTRICTED TRAVEL RECOMMENDED

Ice forming on roadways and bridges in New Castle County

A freezing mist falling over much of the state is expected to make driving hazardous throughout the evening and into Wednesday morning. In most areas, rain and sleet are predicted to turn to snow after midnight, with the greatest accumulation in New Castle County.

Many major arteries in New Castle County are already coated with ice.

According to the National Weather Service, New Castle County could receive 1-3 inches of snow on top of the ice caused by freezing rain and below freezing temperatures. Kent and Sussex counties could see an inch or more of snow.

Ice accumulation is not expected to be heavy enough to cause utility lines to come down and cause power outages. However, utility workers throughout the state are prepared to respond to any power problems.

DelDOT crews are salting roads and have crews ready to plow if snow accumulations require it.

County government offices in New Castle County closed at 2 p.m. Tuesday, and are scheduled to delay opening until 10 a.m. Wednesday morning.

State and local police dealt with numerous accidents and stalled vehicles from late Monday afternoon into Tuesday morning. Most injuries were minor, but police are encouraging drivers to restrict any travel until roads are cleared and dry Wednesday. Precipitation is expected to stop by early morning and temperatures are predicted to rise slightly above freezing by noon Wednesday, helping road clearing efforts.

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Those who must drive are advised to travel at slow speeds, allowing plenty of time and distance for stopping. Emergency management officials remind drivers to have sturdy shoes or boots, a flashlight and a warm coat, hat and gloves should their vehicle become disabled. Drivers with cell phones can dial #77 for help.

If vehicles slide off the road and are unable to return to the roadway and it is not practical to walk for help, drivers should turn on the flashers and remain with the vehicle. If they must remain in a stranded vehicle for any length of time, they should open a rear window slightly and run the heater for short durations until help arrives.

Delaware Emergency Management Agency Director Jamie Turner said reports from DelDOT and Delaware State Police officials in each county and Wilmington indicate road conditions are making driving extremely hazardous in some areas, especially New Castle County. These conditions will last through Tuesday night into Wednesday morning drive time. He reminds the public that safety is the most important issue during this inclement weather and cautions people against any unnecessary driving.

The public is advised to monitor the DelDOT web site, www.deldot.net/ Travel Advisory, www.state.de.us/dema or the State of Delaware web site, www.delaware.gov, Closings and Delays. In addition, they should monitor local broadcast media and print media web sites for updates.

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